

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

4 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-7653



March 11, 1983

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-35-83

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

SUBJECT: COMPLETION OF CHILD ABUSE REPORTING FORMS FOR
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

This All-County Information Notice is to provide assistance to the agencies responsible for the completion of the forms required by the Child Abuse Reporting Law. Responsible agencies are required to use the appropriate forms provided by the Department of Justice (DOJ). The forms are:

Suspected Child Abuse Report	SS 8572	4/81
Suspected Child Abuse Preliminary Investigation Report	SS 8573	4/81
Unfounded Child Abuse Report	SS 8574	4/81
Suspected Child Abuse Report (Use of this form requires prior approval by DOJ)	SS 8575	1/82

We have been apprised that although the forms have been in use for approximately two years, a large percentage of those being sent to DOJ are incomplete, inappropriate, illegible, and generally unacceptable. The DOJ is unable to code much of the information necessary because of the above reasons. The following list covers many of the problems that DOJ is encountering on the submitted forms:

1. The DOJ receives the PINK (third) copy, which may be too light to read. The forms should be completed with a ball-point pen or typed. Felt pens and pencils frequently do not press through to the third and fourth copies. Therefore, be sure to proofread the copies to make sure that they are legible.

If the PINK copy is too light, send a photocopy of the WHITE copy with the PINK copy. Do not send illegible copies to DOJ.

2. This also holds true with handwritten copies which only the originator can read. If it cannot be read it cannot be coded and recorded correctly.
3. The names of the victims, siblings, parents, and alleged abusers/suspects must be filled out with the first, middle and last names and the dates of birth. The notations "S" or "Same" are unacceptable because they cause confusion.
4. The agency name and address must be completed in full to avoid confusion. There are 58 county welfare departments and over 400 police, probation and sheriff's offices also reporting with these forms; the initials DSS, CWD and SSA without an address are meaningless.
5. The Suspected Child Abuse Report (SS 8572) and Suspected Child Abuse Preliminary Investigation Report (SS 8573) are to be sent to DOJ together. After completion of the SS 8573, the PINK copy is to be attached to the SS 8572 and forwarded to DOJ, immediately.
6. The reports are to be submitted to DOJ in situations of suspected child abuse in which there have been preliminary investigations other than general neglect. However, many reports have been inappropriate. For example, the following reasons, by themselves, do not constitute suspected child abuse.
 - a. "The child is a behavior problem or has run away."
 - b. "The mother is hospitalized or detained, and there is no evidence or report of abuse of the child(ren)."
 - c. "The mother has an alcohol or drug problem." Again, no apparent or reported abuse of the child(ren) is indicated.

These forms are not to be used only as internal agency documents. Rather, they are to be completed in accordance with State law and DSS policy for child abuse reporting and in accordance with DOJ directions. Refer to All-County Letters 82-60 (Child Abuse Reporting Law) and 81-117 (Child Abuse Reporting Law, SB 781 (Chapter 1071, Statutes 1980), as Amended) for information regarding the Child Abuse Reporting Law and DSS policy for implementing this law.

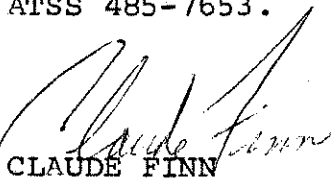
7. A report must be submitted even if it is unfounded in the preliminary investigation in order to ensure that any reports submitted for the same case by a different law enforcement agency can be verified as also unfounded with that agency. In this case, submit the PINK copy of the Unfounded Child Abuse Report (SS 8574) together with the PINK copies of the Suspected Child Abuse Report (SS 8572) and the Suspected Child Abuse Preliminary Investigation Report (SS 8573). If you are using the alternate Child Abuse Reporting Form (SS 8575), check both the preliminary investigation and unfounded boxes and send the PINK copy to DOJ in accordance with your approved procedure for use of this form.

An unsubstantiated report of suspected child abuse does not constitute an unfounded report. "It is important to note that a case cannot be reported unfounded unless it was proved unfounded; i.e., the incident did not in fact occur (e.g., false report, inherently improbable, injury was accidental or did not constitute child abuse, etc.). A case cannot be classified unfounded simply because it was not proved. (ACL 81-117)"

The DOJ will be sending out a users manual within the next few months regarding child abuse reporting. The DOJ will continue returning those forms which are incomplete or illegible.

Instructions for completion of the forms are on the reverse side of each form. Please remind all appropriate staff of these instructions. It is important that the agency review all forms for the above areas in addition to completeness and legibility prior to sending to DOJ.

If you have any questions regarding the completion of these forms, please call Ann Kelly at DOJ (916) 739-5109 or your Department of Social Services program management consultant of the Family and Children's Services Branch at (916) 445-7653 or ATSS 485-7653.



CLAUDE FINN

Deputy Director

cc: CWDA